

Baird Urges Support for Programs that Maintain U.S. Competitiveness and Economic Prosperity (November 13, 2007)

Washington, D.C. - As a staunch advocate for programs that help the U.S. maintain its competitive edge in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, Congressman Brian Baird (WA-03), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Research and Science Education, today sent a letter urging adequate funding for the National Science Foundation (NSF). Ranking Member Vernon Ehlers (MI-03) and six of Congressman Baird's colleagues also signed onto the letter.

The letter requested that the Appropriations Committee support \$6.553 billion in funding for the NSF, the only federal agency who supports all fields in science and engineering, except the medical sciences. This includes supporting 20% of all federally funded basic research conducted at the nation's colleges and universities and is the major source of federal backing for mathematics, computer science, and the social sciences.

"In order for our country to remain competitive, we must invest in programs that support math and science education, provide for qualified well-trained teachers, and improves students' success for our future prosperity," said Chairman Baird. "By investing in the National Science Foundation, we are investing in America's scientific and technological future."

A copy of the letter is below.

The Honorable David Obey
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
H218 Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jerry Lewis
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Alan Mollohan
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations

H309 Capitol

1016 Longworth House Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20515

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Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

As members of the Subcommittee on Research and Science Education of the House Science and Technology Committee, we thank you for your continued bipartisan support for the National Science Foundation (NSF).

We urge you to continue this tradition in the Fiscal Year 2008 Commerce, Science, Justice Appropriations conference report by supporting \$6.553 billion in NSF funding, as provided for in the Senate bill. This funding level will help bolster an agency that is absolutely vital to ensuring U.S. competitiveness.

A strong investment in NSF will ensure that we continue to fund the basic research that is critical to maintaining our competitive edge in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. As you are aware, NSF is the only federal agency whose mission includes support for all fields of science and engineering, except the medical sciences. It supports 20 percent of all federally funded basic research conducted at the nation's colleges and universities and is the major source of federal backing for mathematics, computer science, and the social sciences.

In addition, this funding level will help provide the resources we need to strengthen and expand NSF's educational programs. There is now widespread recognition that we must improve math and science education to ensure a scientifically-literate society as well as a continued supply of young U.S. researchers and to fill the technical jobs of tomorrow. Providing for well-qualified, well-trained teachers and improving students' opportunities is the key to our country's strength and future prosperity.

The America COMPETES Act, which was signed into law in August of this year, authorizes a substantial increase in NSF funding for Fiscal Year 2008 and puts NSF funding on a path to doubling over the next seven years by providing \$6.6 billion for Fiscal Year 2008. This increase in NSF funding has received widespread support from educators, employers, and researchers, as well as the Administration. We strongly believe that we should fund NSF at a level closest to that authorized in the America COMPETES Act.

In the past, NSF investments have fostered major technological advances in areas and industries that have been critical to the economic growth and national security of our country. We respectfully request that you make a strong investment in America's scientific and technological future by funding NSF at the level provided for in the Senate bill.

Sincerely,

/s/

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